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To: Selected District Superintendents
Selected CBEDS Coordinators
Dropout Prevention Coordinators

From: Susan Lange, Deputy Superintendent
Finance, Technology and Administration Branch

Subject: **Dropout Definition Unchanged for CBEDS October 2002**
Dropout Definition to be Modified for CBEDS October 2003

The California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS) October 2002 data collection will continue to use the same definition for reporting dropouts as used in the past. At this time we are planning to delay the adoption of a new dropout definition until October 2003 in order to allow your districts sufficient time to make modifications to data collection procedures.

The definition of dropouts will be changed for the CBEDS October 2003 data collection. As discussed in the June 13, 2002 memorandum titled "Possible Modification of Definition of Dropouts for California Basic Educational Data System," we will modify the current definition of dropouts to match the definition developed by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES). The NCES definition was included as an attachment with the June 13, 2002 letter. It is also available at: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/demographics/coord/dropout1.pdf>. It is possible that continuing development of our Consolidated State Plan under the No Child Left Behind Act could require a change in this plan.

Accuracy of Dropout Reporting

Accurate tracking and reporting of dropouts is critical in our efforts to address this serious issue and effectively take steps to remedy the dropout problem. The current discrepancy between graduates and dropouts reported through the CBEDS data collection leaves a large number of students unaccounted for, and unanswered questions about where these students have gone.

Eligibility for USDE School Dropout Prevention Program

The June 13, 2002 letter also explained that determining eligibility for the U.S. Department of Education School Dropout Prevention program is based on dropout data using the NCES definition. This year California and several other states that had not implemented the NCES definition were not eligible to receive USDE School Dropout Prevention program competitive funds.

In order to allow California school districts sufficient time to modify their data collection process, the NCES definition will not be adopted until October 2003. This delay will again make California schools ineligible for the USDE Dropout Prevention program ; this year, however, we will continue to work with USDE whether there is any possibility for California schools to qualify for funds during this transition year.

Thank you for the time and effort you and your staff spend on collecting and reporting dropout data and your patience as the dropout definition is modified. Please contact Karl Scheff, Director, Education Demographics Unit, at (916) 327-0192 if you have any questions.

SL: ks